

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### **M.C. Dixon Lumber Company Inc**

Alabama Technology Network

#### **Technology Network Assistance Keeps Family Business Connected with Sales Force**

##### **Client Profile:**

M.C. Dixon Lumber Company has been a progressive sawmill processor since its beginning over 75 years ago. The Eufaula, Alabama, family-owned business has seen its sales and employees grow over the years, with the company employing over 100 workers today. The company produces lumber according to various industry and customer needs.

##### **Situation:**

The sawmill industry is no different from many industries today. Increased domestic and foreign competition has placed pressure to lower costs. To remain competitive over the years, Dixon has embraced technology to eliminate waste and streamline its sawmill processes. In a more recent move to lower costs, Dixon decided to outsource its sales functions. The company realized that outsourcing this important function would only be successful if its outside sales team had access to timely information back at the plant. Accurate cost information, wood inventory levels, and customer information is very critical in the commodity business in which Dixon competes. Not knowing the current market price and cost of wood at any given time could result in a severe negative impact on Dixon's bottom line. The company contacted the Alabama Technology Network (ATN), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

##### **Solution:**

To meet this information challenge, engineers at the Alabama Technology Network assisted Dixon in the design and implementation of a Virtual Private Network. This computer network provides secure and timely communications between Dixon Lumber and its outside sales team. The system enables the outside team to monitor inventory levels, track invoices, and view and other sales related information.

##### **Results:**

- \* Cost savings of \$60,000.
- \* Anticipated cost savings of \$600,000 over next 10 years.
- \* Achieved a more competitive and profitable position.

##### **Testimonial:**

"We sincerely appreciate the hard work and responsiveness of the Alabama Technology Network in guiding us in this process and look forward to continuing our strong partnership in the future."

R.M. Dixon, Jr., President